

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A split flange capable of being fitted around a pipe having a flexible pipe body and a flared portion formed at an end of the pipe, the flared portion being capable of engaging with the split flange, the split flange comprising:

a plurality of arcuate flange members, which form a flange shape being defined by ~~an~~ a circular outer periphery upon assembling;

two connecting portions provided at two end portions and formed integral with each of said plurality of arcuate flange members, the two connecting portions projecting radially out from the outer periphery,

wherein neighboring flange members among said plurality of arcuate flange members are capable of being rotatably connected to each other at said connecting portions forming respective mating connecting portions;

wherein one of said respective mating connecting portions has a projection; and

wherein the other connecting portion of said respective mating connecting portions has a connecting hole, said projection being fitted into said connecting hole, whereby said respective mating connecting portions are rotatably joined together.

wherein each end portion of each flange member is formed as a thinner portion than a neighboring body portion of said flange member such that these end portions can be connected to each other in a laminated manner wherein a thickness of the split flange is constant over a circumferential direction upon assembling;

wherein each of said plurality of flange members have at least one recess for holding a flared portion of a pipe therein, such that said at least one recess forms a circumferential recess at an inner circumferential side face of said plurality of flange members upon assembling and wherein each flange member further comprises slant portions disposed at end portions of the plurality of flange members.

Claim 2. (Canceled)

Claim 3. (Canceled)

Claim 4. (Canceled)

Claim 5. (Canceled)

Claim 6. (Canceled)

Claim 7. (Canceled)

Claim 8. (Canceled)

Claim 9. (Canceled).

Claim 10. (New) The split flange as in claim 1, wherein said slant portions form inclined faces disposed at end portions of the recesses, wherein when the flange members are coupled together, joint portions of said recesses may be in contact with said inclined faces.

Claim 11. (New) The split flange as in claim 1, wherein said slant portions are inclined such that there are a plurality of faces disposed at different angles which are disposed at end portions of said flange members.

Claim 12. (New) The split flange as in claim 1, wherein said at least one recess is in the form of a channel, having a central recess that is bounded on both sides by a body section of the flange.

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